



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Branstetter, or Steve.Branstetter@noaa.gov  
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **A Proposed Rule for Amendment 13 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico Available for Public Comment**

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public comment on a proposed rule to implement actions described in Amendment 13 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council submitted Amendment 13 for review, approval, and implementation by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary). On behalf of the Secretary, NOAA Fisheries Service approved Amendment 13 on February 21, 2006. The intended effect of the proposed rule is to stabilize participation in the shrimp fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, and to provide better information by which to manage the fishery.

The proposed rule, if implemented, would give effect to the regulatory changes summarized below. For a complete description of the actions, please obtain a copy of Amendment 13 and the proposed rule (see Addresses and Dates).

### **Royal Red Shrimp Fishery Permit Endorsement:**

The proposed rule would establish a requirement for royal red shrimp vessels fishing in the Gulf of Mexico federal waters to possess a royal red shrimp endorsement to their Gulf of Mexico federal shrimp vessel permit. Specifically identifying royal red shrimp harvesters through a permit endorsement would provide the opportunity to gather needed biological, social, and economic data to appropriately manage this fishery.

### **Federal Penaeid Shrimp Vessel Permit Moratorium:**

The proposed rule would establish a 10-year moratorium on the issuance of new federal shrimp vessel permits. If implemented, permits under the moratorium would be fully transferable, allowing permittees the flexibility to enter or exit the fishery as they choose. To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium, vessels must have been issued a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit prior to and including December 6, 2003. Additionally, an owner who sold his

qualified vessel, had his qualified vessel repossessed, or otherwise lost use of his qualified vessel (i.e., damage, sinking, unaffordable repairs), but who obtained a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit for the same vessel or another vessel equipped for offshore shrimp fishing (at least 5 net tons) prior to the date of publication of the final rule would be eligible to renew such permit under the moratorium.

### **Standardized Reporting:**

The proposed rule would establish a standardized method to regularly monitor and report the catch, effort, and gear used in the shrimp fishery of the Gulf of Mexico. A program would be established where a sample of federally-permitted shrimp vessels would be equipped with electronic logbooks (ELBs) provided by NOAA Fisheries Service, and a sample of federally-permitted shrimp vessels would carry observers. The ELB program would provide better information regarding effort, and the observer program would provide information on catch, effort, and bycatch. Additional reporting requirements include mandatory reporting of landings and vessel and gear characteristics.

### **Addresses and Dates:**

Written comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on **May 22, 2006**. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: 0648-AS15.proposed@noaa.gov. Include "0648-AS15-proposed" in the subject line.
- Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: Follow the instructions for submitting comments. <http://www.regulations.gov>
- Mail: Steve Branstetter, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33701.
- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attention: Steve Branstetter. All comments will be addressed in the final rule.

Copies of Amendment 13, which includes an Environmental Assessment, a Regulatory Impact Review, and an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, are available from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, Florida, 33607; phone: 813-348-1630; fax: 813-348-1711, [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org)

Copies of the proposed rule are available from NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701. Electronic copies of the proposed rule may be obtained from the Federal Register website at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and

enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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